

Opening Conversations on Diversity and Inclusion in Professional Wargaming

The Obvious Stuff

There is [good evidence from Social Science](#) that a diverse group generates better results.

The [McKinsey & Company Report](#) shows a statistically significant relationship between a more diverse leadership team and better financial performance.

In [The Wisdom of Crowds](#), James Surowiecki identifies the importance of diversity and independence of thought in group decision making. [A summary of the book is here.](#)

The Deloitte [Review Report](#) details how performance can be improved by diversity, and how leaders can ensure it doesn't end up as a pointless box-ticking exercise.

There is no free lunch



The Not-so Obvious Stuff

Diverse Teams feel less comfortable – sharing the decision space with people who don't think like me.

Diversity can increase friction – lots of people thinking very differently can take longer to reach a decision.

Diversity without inclusion can result in a negative effect, because it can end up being "tokenism" to hit a target.

The "Business Case" for simple Diversity doesn't work – it is more complicated than that.

Recruiting should be on merit, not quotas – simplistic thinking ignores underlying biases.



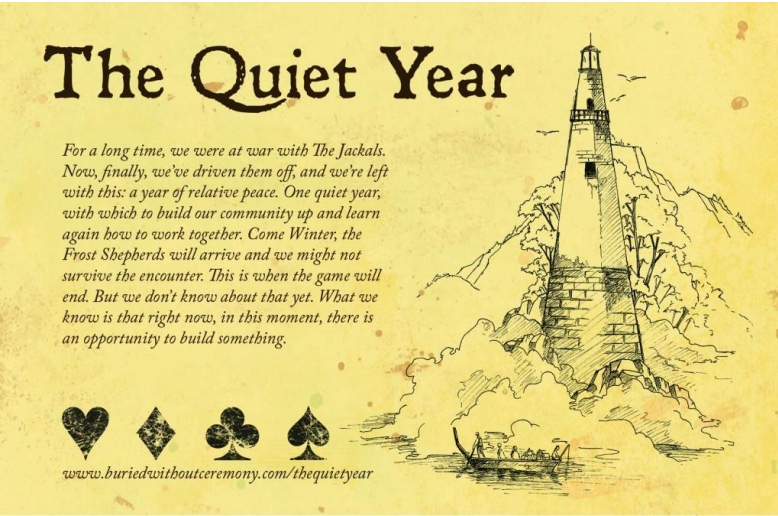
Wargaming

Professional Wargamers need commercial "hobby" games to get an understanding of language, systems and mechanisms.

Hobby games are extremely diverse, but there are parts of the community who are extremely toxic.

Playing with toy soldiers can be fun, but isn't going to help you in professional wargame design.

The greatest innovation and insight comes from boardgames and indie Role Playing Games.



How can you help?

Seek out mentors.

Learn facilitation and adjudication.

Encourage others.

Curate safe groups to practice with constructive criticism.

Don't be too precious – war is about killing people – wargaming can save lives.

Don't give up.





The 'So What' for Wargames



Inclusion in:

- Design and development
- Facilitation
- Adjudication
- Reporting & analysis

Design & Development



- Clarity of Purpose
- Understanding the Audience
- Diverse approaches to problem solving – consult widely
- Build your game for inclusion
- Always Speak To Strangers (if you can)

Facilitation



Professional Facilitation has inclusion at its core.

- Every voice must be heard – and considered
- Diverse thinking is identified and encouraged. “Diverse thinking reduces risk”
- Good manners matter... you do not have permission to be a jerk... even by accident.

Adjudication

Beware of group-think -

- In constructing adjudication methods
- When using the players to input to adjudication
- Where control judgement is being used
- “They might be weird, but they might also be right”
- Be VERY wary of HIPPOs (and MEPOs)

Reporting

“But the Minutes ARE the Meeting, Minister”

- Defining data collection clearly and open to diverse inputs.
- Data collection methods
- Cognitive filtering and bias
- Recognition and acknowledgment
- Minority reports

What Would YOU do?



ISSUE 1

In a room of 20 players engaged in a open face to face map-based wargame, you happen to notice one player at the back of the room reading a newspaper.

ISSUE 2

You notice two of your players arguing with raised voices in one corner of the room.

ISSUE 3

One of the participants of your game keeps referring female participants in the rooms as 'the girls'.

ISSUE 4

"This game is crap". A player in the game keeps challenging the adjudication process and pointing out real flaws in the system, but seems to lack the social skills to do it politely.

ISSUE 5

You are designing a classified wargame about the politics of a country. None of the design team is from the country, or has any direct knowledge of the culture of the country.

ISSUE 6

One of your design team is very inexperienced and under 25 years old. They repeatedly and enthusiastically bring up clever ideas for game design that, from your decades of experience, you don't think will work.